

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6132



**PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE
SECURITY AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**

FINAL ASPHALT PAVING MATERIALS

Pennsylvania Avenue between 15TH and 17TH Streets, NW, and
Jackson and Madison Places, NW
Washington, DC

Submission by the Federal Highway Administration

January 8, 2004

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of the natural-toned asphalt pavement and asphalt paver blocks for the landscape and security project on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House and Jackson and Madison Places pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §8722(d) and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)).

Commission Action

The Commission:

Approves the natural-toned asphalt pavement and asphalt paver blocks for the security and landscape project on Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House (between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, including Jackson and Madison Places), Washington DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.31(44.70)41250.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

Draft STAFF RECOMMENDATION

E. Miller
Draft (12/17/03)

NCPC File No. 6132



PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE SECURITY AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS FINAL PAVING MATERIALS

Pennsylvania Avenue between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, and
Jackson and Madison Places, NW,
Washington, DC

Submission by the Federal Highway Administration

December 30, 2003

Abstract

On September 04, 2003 the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) approved the final site and building plans for Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, which called for landscape and security improvements to this important place. The final approval excepted out the third granite selection and the asphalt paving materials. On December 04, 2003, NCPC approved the third and final granite material for the avenue. The Federal Highway Administration has submitted the synthetic asphalt paving for the avenue in front of the White House and Jackson and Madison Places, and the asphalt paver blocks to be used in the expanded sidewalk area on Jackson and Madison Places.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of the synthetic asphalt pavement material and asphalt paver blocks for the landscape and security project on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House and Jackson and Madison Places pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §8722(d) and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. §8722(b)(1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

approves the synthetic asphalt pavement and asphalt paver blocks for the Pennsylvania Avenue

security and landscape project on Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House (between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, including Jackson and Madison Places), Washington DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.31(44.70)41250.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Project Location

The proposed project is located in President's Park on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, and includes both Jackson and Madison Places.

Project Description

Synthetic Asphalt Pavement

The central portion of the Avenue, in front of the White House, and the full lengths of Jackson and Madison Places will be paved with a durable, stabilized synthetic asphalt pavement reddish brown in tone with an exposed 9mm aggregate. While there will be a contrast between the surface of the granite and synthetic asphalt pavement, the aggregate mix in the synthetic asphalt pavement has been selected for its color value (the degree of the lightness or darkness of color) to complement the granite panels and for its greater saturation of reds and browns to complement the brick material on the site. The aggregate pavement will withstand the structural requirements of the various uses and accommodate pedestrian and handicap users.

While refining the aggregate color and size to produce the right color mix and visual quality, the FHWA continued to evaluate different pavement types and has concluded that the synthetic asphalt pavement has the most desirable structural and maintenance qualities and is a perceptually softer, more natural paving material, and therefore is the most appropriate to achieve the desired character.

Expanded Sidewalks on Jackson and Madison Places

To provide appropriate security at the Jackson and Madison Places checkpoints, the sidewalk will be expanded to narrow the street between the two rows of bollards that form the sally ports. To retain the visual continuity of the street and respect the L'Enfant Plan to the extent possible, FHWA is recommending a reddish toned 6-inch square asphalt paver block for the expanded sidewalk material on Jackson and Madison Places. The paver will be similar in tone to the proposed synthetic pavement, thereby maintaining the visual continuity of the street to the degree

possible and minimizing the impact to historic character. The paver block is park-like in character and appropriately scaled for Jackson and Madison Places and will complement the roadway paving, the brick sidewalks and the adjacent townhouses. The existing granite curb will remain and a new matching granite curb will be installed to form the expanded sidewalks. The presidential bollard and guard booths will be located within the expanded sidewalk area.

EVALUATION

The asphalt paving materials will accommodate pedestrians, skaters, bikers, and horses, as well as withstand the loading requirements of delivery vehicles, emergency equipment, motorcades and inaugural parade elements. Additionally, the material will not preclude the future reopening of the street to vehicular traffic, or the future construction of a tunnel under Pennsylvania Avenue.

The asphalt paving materials are perceptually softer and a more natural paving material, therefore will spatially connect the White House with Lafayette Park, strengthening its historical relationship to President's Park, and achieve the desired character, encouraging pedestrians to slow down, stroll, and reflect on the significance of the place.

These paving materials will also reinforce the overall design intention to mediate between the European formality of the L'Enfant Plan, the naturalism of Downing's Lafayette Park and the open setting of the White House grounds.

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION and RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

On September 4, 2003, the Commission approved the final site and building plans submitted by the Federal Highway Administration for the security and landscape project for Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, and Jackson and Madison Places, except for the granite type proposed for the gutter along the southern curb line of Pennsylvania Avenue, the aggregate color mix and binder for the asphalt pavement, and the pavement type to be used in the expanded sidewalks on Jackson and Madison Places. The Commission approved the final granite material at its December 4, 2003 meeting.

While refining the aggregate color and size to produce the right color mix and visual quality, the FHWA continued to evaluate different pavement types and has concluded that the synthetic asphalt pavement is the most appropriate to achieve the desired character. The aggregate mix has been selected for its color value (the degree of the lightness or darkness of color) to complement the granite panels and for its greater saturation of reds and browns to complement the brick material on the site.

FHWA has proposed 6-inch square asphalt paver as the material to be used on the expanded sidewalks on Jackson and Madison Places. The paver will complement the roadway paving, the brick sidewalks and the warm colors of the townhouses on Jackson and Madison Places.

The existing granite curb will remain and a new granite curb will be installed to form the expanded sidewalks.

CONSULTATION

FHWA, in cooperation with NCPC, was lead agency for the Section 106 consultation on this project. Many parties have been consulted throughout the planning and design development for the redesign of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. The primary efforts are listed in the order to most recent activity.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) moved to approve the proposed synthetic asphalt pavement and the asphalt paver block on December 18, 2003, and is expected to confirm this motion on January 15, 2004 with a full quorum. The CFA approved the final granite material at its November 20, 2003.

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on October 15, 2003. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project had been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, the General Services Administration, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with terms of the MOA, signed on September 3, 2003, FHWA held a 106 public consultation meeting on October 9, 2003, to review and obtain comments on the paving materials for Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House and Jackson and Madison Places. In addition, the terms of FHWA's agreement to monitor the vibration in adjacent historic structures during the construction phase were reviewed and approved. The terms of the MOA have been met. Interested individuals, planning and historic preservation organizations, and area stakeholders were invited to attend the meeting.

National Environmental Policy Act

NCPC staff analyzed, in conformance with the requirements of NEPA, the prepared Environmental Assessment (EA) completed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in April 2003. The Commission staff participated in the development of that document, acting with delegated authority in that effort, as a cooperating agency. Staff prepared and completed, on May 30, 2003, a Finding of No Significant Impact based on the EA, concluding that the analysis was sufficient and demonstrated no significant environmental impacts from the planned action and its final design.